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THE YACHT AS A NAVAL AUXILIARY.

BY THE HON. WILLIAM MCADOO, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
THE NAVY.

THE true yachtsman is a genuine sailor in whose breast is that strong, enduring love of the sea that voluntarily braves its dangers and shrinks not from its possible privations and discomforts. His is the eye quick to catch the lines of beauty, the grace of form, and the elements of strength and utility in all manner of craft that go down to the sea. If he is worthy of this royal sport, his soul has heard and responded to the voice of nature, and to him the olden gods of wind and wave are no longer myths but eternal verities, speaking to him of mysteries and secrets that the profane heart cannot understand. Man first built vessels of necessity and utility, then ships of war, and lastly those for pleasure, and the last is first cousin to the second, and the country which produces them in numbers has got the naval spirit. The modern well-conditioned yacht assimilates her life as nearly as possible to that of the war ship in her order, discipline, etiquette, and even outward emblems and signs, and as a general rule all yachtsmen are the warmest and closest friends of the naval establishment. They have for many years been the most earnest advocates of a naval reserve, and are to-day, to a large extent, the stimulus that helps forward the existing naval militia.

The growth of yachting in the United States in the last twenty years, marvellous as it has been, is but one of the many signs of the turning of our people again to the sea, and the re-establishment of our merchant marine in the proud position it held in the days of the famous clipper ships. At heart we are a maritime people, and, possessing, as we do, a long stretch of coast, enclosing broad arms of the sea, it is not surprising that

yachting is growing in popularity. No other country affords such broad expanses of sheltered waters as Massachusetts Bay, Long Island Sound, the Chesapeake, the sounds of the Carolinas, Mobile Bay, Santa Barbara Channel, San Francisco Bay, Puget Sound, and the great and lesser lakes, with their numerous tributaries and adjacent harbors.

On January 1st of this year there were ninety regular organized yacht clubs and four auxiliary associations in the United States. The yachts are owned either by clubs, by two or three owners associated together, or by individuals who can afford to own one or more on their own account. There are about two thousand two hundred and fifty of this last named class in this country, and quite a number of them own two or three each. In all the remainder of this hemisphere there are but seven yacht clubs all told, three in Canada, and one each in Nova Scotia, Cuba, Jamaica, and the Argentine Republic. The state of New York heads the list with thirty-two clubs ; Massachusetts has nineteen ; New Jersey, ten ; Connecticut, seven ; California and Rhode Island, three each ; Maine, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Florida, two each ; North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama and Louisiana, one each ; and there are ten clubs along the Lake region on our northern boundary, two of which are included in the thirty-two credited above to New York. Of the clubs enumerated as to States, at least forty are located in New York harbor, Long Island Sound, and their adjacent waters. The interior waterway communication along our coast line, so well illustrated in the recent trip of the torpedo boat "Cushing," gives additional impetus to yachting through the enormous water course it is now possible to traverse in even the smallest class of yachts with perfect safety, and to the rivalry thus offered through visiting yachts from various sections of the coast.

What is or may be, from a naval standpoint, the value of all this individual and organized effort ?

There are two elements to be considered : First, the men ; and second, the yachts themselves. Both are now of value to the country, the yachts in the lesser degree than the trained yachtsmen, but both may be made of greater value by a proper appreciation of their possibilities. The men, through their experience in handling yachts under all conditions of sea and weather, through their acquired knowledge of the waters in which

they cruise, and through their general nautical training, offer a magnificent field for the formation of State naval militia organizations and ultimately for a national naval reserve. And while few yachts are so constructed as to be of much use in time of war, yet the possibilities are such that, by mutual agreement between yacht owners and the government when the plans are under consideration, they may be constructed to answer the double purpose of yachts in time of peace and naval auxiliaries in time of war.

The fostering of a reserve of men and ships, supplemental to the regular forces, is only second in importance to the creation of a navy itself. Maritime power goes hand in hand with naval power, for a commercial marine can only be built up and maintained coincidentally with the creation of an efficient navy. Unquestionably the building of war ships has contributed largely to the renewal of our ship building industries, and the study of ship construction for war purposes has served the double purpose of improving the details, and of raising the standard of the tests and requirements, of ship building in general. In the especial construction of vessels such as the "St. Paul" and "St. Louis" as naval auxiliaries, we note the gradual approach of types of ships in which the commercial and naval ideas are blended. A similar approach in type of steam yachts and the smaller auxiliaries of the navy, is sure to come later.

It takes longer to make seamen, however, than to make ships. That our present naval *personnel* is inadequate, even for peace conditions, is shown by the increase on July 1st of this year of the complement of men in our navy by 1,000, simply because we have recently added a few new ships to the navy, yet the total force at present is only 10,000 men. At the breaking out of the Civil War the complement had been fixed at 7,600. By July, 1863, there were 34,000 in the service, and when the war closed there were 51,500 enrolled in the navy. Our merchant marine, then glorious in its extent, furnished most of these; but where shall we look for our reserve now?

At the end of the war there were 7,600 officers in the navy, and 671 ships in commission. Of the officers, but one-seventh were regulars. Where shall we get others now? Of the ships, but 277 were built by the government. Where shall we get our auxiliaries now? Our merchant marine is small, and modern

naval requirements are different, the naval profession being so complex; where, therefore, are we to get our reserve of men and ships? They can no longer be picked up under the spur of necessity. It is now a question of systematic, steady preparation and organization in time of peace.

The naval militia organizations, as bred and created largely in a yachting atmosphere and now existing in thirteen States, with a present complement of 226 officers and 2,706 men, are the first auxiliaries to be considered. The existing naval militia is primarily a State organization, dependent largely upon local and State support, and enrolled as part of the National Guard. It is not a true naval reserve which should owe allegiance only to the general government and be subject solely to the naval regulations governing the general service. While subject, however, to State control, the naval militia is kept in constant touch with the regular establishment by receiving, for arms and equipments, in each State, a portion of the \$25,000 annually appropriated for its encouragement by Congress, and distributed by the Department under such rules as are deemed wisest and best for the object to be accomplished. Congress has also authorized by law the loan of unused ships and other property to States having organized and equipped naval militia. The ships so loaned are those out of commission and unsuited for regular naval service. The greatest difficulty now encountered is to find a sufficient number of such vessels to meet the demand. The discarded wooden ships of the old navy make most excellent inshore armories for these organizations, but, unfortunately, these have nearly all been disposed of by sale or otherwise. Following the spirit, as well as the letter of the law, the Department has endeavored to give to these organizations every possible encouragement, keeping them in touch with the navy by advice on all professional subjects, inspection by officers whenever desired, issuing printed documents for their instruction, opening up to them all sources of professional information, and giving them each summer an opportunity for a short cruise on some of the ships in the regular service, where, in addition to being taught somewhat of the manifold duties of a man-of-warsman, they are enabled to practise firing the great guns at a target from the moving ship. They are also allowed to draw at first cost arms and equipments from the portion of the national allowance allotted to their State. As a result, in some

of the States, the naval militia is the best armed military body in the State, having rapid fire guns of the very latest pattern, magazine rifles, and good serviceable navy revolvers. All this, however, would be of little avail without intelligent, persistent, and enthusiastic individual effort and the support of the State to whose forces they belong. It is but right that it should be said here that some of the States have been most liberal and progressive in encouraging and aiding this new arm of defense. In the States where the organization is best and most efficient these results have been secured by great labor, patience, and tact. There were and are sources of opposition calling forth determination and sound judgment.

What is the future of the naval militia? Will it grow into a true naval reserve under national auspices, such for instance as that possessed by England? In time of war, where will be its most practicable field? Manning sea coast batteries, inner line coast defense ships, or furnishing crews to the regular sea-going fighting vessels? As to all this, the best officers in the service differ; and indeed at this moment, the possibilities of the organization are so great and its field so wide that no one can give categorical replies to these queries. That it is a good organization for the country scarcely any one will deny. It is now largely in its formative period, and when wisely led, is following the line of least resistance in search of its best field of usefulness as a part of the national defense of the coast and on the high seas. It is everywhere doing good, hard, honest, preparatory work, often under very discouraging circumstances; is full of naval enthusiasm; and willing to make sacrifices and undergo hardships. As a purely local organization in the large cities having navigable water front, it will, in case of need, be found a most efficient military body doing work which could not be done, at least so well, by the purely land forces. Its rapid growth in many States without any concerted movement or official encouragement is especially suggestive of the active and unselfish spirit of patriotism to be found in our country.

The sea-going yachts give to yachtsmen the very best training in seamanship and navigation, but it is to the steam yacht in particular that we must look for the auxiliary vessel for naval purposes in time of war. Three types of these are now being developed.

1st. The large, full-powered steam yachts like the "Atlanta," "Corsair," "Conqueror," "Columbia," "Electra," "Eleanor," "Margarita," "May," "Namouna," "Nourmahal," "Oneida," "Peerless," "Sagamore," "Sapphire," "Utowana," and "Valiant."

2d. The auxiliary type with moderate steam and sail power, as illustrated by the "Intrepid" and "Wild Duck."

3d. The high speed boats for sheltered waters and comparatively short runs, like the "Now Then," "Say When," "Helvetia," "Norwood" and a host of others.

The first and third classes might be utilized as torpedo boats by considerable alterations in the direction of removing unnecessary weights and strengthening the decks, but the types in the future, by conforming in the plans to one or two necessary conditions, might be made to answer all the purposes of the owner in time of peace and of the government in time of war. Just how this agreement would be arrived at between the owner and the government is a question depending largely upon the patriotic impulses of the owners and upon the liberality of the government in the way of guarantees. For instance, the government might furnish inspectors to superintend the building; provide all the supports, racks, bulkheads, fittings and outfits of a military character; have the yachts regularly inspected as to hull, fittings and machinery and the competence of the master and engineers; and finally, enroll them in a naval reserve, with the right to fly a special flag and to uniform their officers and crew in conformity therewith.

In return, the government should have the right to charter or purchase them in time of war, and, by special agreement, to use them for a few days each year for drill or training purposes at a time when the owners would need them least. Granting that this system would not spoil a yacht in any way for the purposes for which the owner built her, and that the cost to the government, outside of the actual inspection and the war materials, should be more or less nominal and should in no circumstances include anything in the nature of a bonus, it would seem that the advantages on both sides might be sufficient to warrant a trial of the system. There are, and probably always will be, numerous Whitehead and Howell torpedo outfits stored at the Torpedo Station, at Newport, R. I., and the process of

fitting out or converting a yacht would only occupy a few days.

There are three methods of installing the tubes from which the torpedoes are fired: 1st, over all; 2d, between decks; and 3d, below the water line. The last named is very expensive and need not be considered. It is the height of the upper deck above the water that determines which of the other two is used. Eleven feet is considered the limit at which a torpedo may be launched. If the upper deck is higher than this, the installation must be between decks. This necessitates extra weights, as the shutter for the tube and the ball joint for training a beam are required. The question of weights is most important.

Whitehead torpedoes weigh about 850 pounds each, and at least two are carried for each tube. Except in time of war or during periods of drill, the torpedoes would not be carried on board. The number of tubes would depend on the size of the yacht. The lower deck tubes, mounts, deck circles, etc., weigh about 2,800 pounds, and the upper deck fittings, complete, about 2,100 pounds. Each yacht would require a Bliss air compressor, with separator and accessories, weighing about 475 pounds.

The Howell torpedo weighs about 514 pounds. Weights are practically the same for the mounts, but no air compressor is needed. A boiler pressure of 80 pounds of steam is, however, required to operate the fly-wheel.

As regards the weight of battery, any type of one-pounder rapid-fire gun will weigh with mounts from 225 to 275 pounds, and the boxes of ammunition about 122 pounds each.

Within the limits of this article it has been impossible to speak of the great mass of small steam and sailing craft which are sailed and managed by their owners, who are in large part young men and boys strongly imbued with a love of things nautical and who, in case of necessity, being highly intelligent, more or less skilled in the arts of the sailor, and deeply patriotic, could be relied on as a most excellent and efficient force for naval defensive operations.

The eager and enthusiastic yachting spirit now abroad in our land bodes well, not only for the navy, but for the merchant marine, to see a healthy revival of which is the ardent hope of all who love the Republic.

WILLIAM MCADOO.